



## **Solicitation Information**

**Date: March 26, 2013**

**RFP # 7461365**

**TITLE: Online Program Service Provider**

**Submission Deadline: April 24, 2013 @ 11:00 am (Local Prevailing Time)**

Questions concerning this solicitation may be e-mailed to the Division of Purchases at [questions@purchasing.ri.gov](mailto:questions@purchasing.ri.gov) no later than **April 9, 2013 @ 12:00 noon** (Local Prevailing Time). Please reference the RFP # on all correspondence and send questions in a *Microsoft Word format*. Questions received, if any, will be answered and posted on the Internet as an addendum to this solicitation. It is the responsibility of all interested parties to download this information.

<b>SURETY REQUIRED: No</b> <b>BOND REQUIRED: No</b>
--

**Thomas Bovis**  
**Interdepartmental Project Manager**

**Vendors must register on-line at the State Purchasing Website at [www.purchasing.state.ri.us](http://www.purchasing.state.ri.us).**

**NOTE TO VENDORS:**

**Offers received without the entire completed four-page RIVIP Generated Bidder Certification Form attached may result in disqualification.**

**THIS PAGE IS NOT A BIDDER CERTIFICATION FORM**

## SECTION 1 – INSTRUCTIONS AND NOTIFICATIONS TO OFFERERS:

The Rhode Island Department of Administration/Division of Purchases, on behalf of The University of Rhode Island is soliciting proposals for an **Online Program Service Provider** from qualified OFFERERS, and in accordance with the terms of this Request for Quotations and the State's General Conditions of Purchase, which is available at [www.purchasing.ri.gov](http://www.purchasing.ri.gov).

- Potential Offerors are advised to review all sections of this Request carefully and to follow instructions completely, as failure to make a complete submission as described elsewhere herein may result in rejection of the proposal.
- All costs associated with developing or submitting a proposal in response to this Request, or to provide oral or written clarification of its contents shall be borne by the Offeror. The State and Rhode Island College assume no responsibility for these costs.
- Proposals are considered to be irrevocable for a period of not less than sixty (60) days following the opening date, and may not be withdrawn, except with the express written permission of the State Purchasing Agent.
- All pricing submitted will be considered to be firm and fixed unless otherwise indicated herein. The proposed fee and hourly rates included in each firm's proposal shall be the basis of compensation. If increases due to inflation, changes in employee compensation, or costs of living are anticipated this must be reflected in the proposals.
- In accordance with Title 7, Chapter 1.1 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, no foreign corporation shall have the right to transact business in the state until it has procured a Certificate of Authority to do so from the Rhode Island Secretary of State (401-222-3040).
- Offerors are advised that all materials submitted for consideration in Response to this solicitation will be considered to be public records, as defined in Title 38 Chapter 2 of the Rhode Island General Laws, without exception, and will be released for inspection immediately upon request, once an award has been made.
- It is intended that an award pursuant to this Request will be made to a prime contractor or contractors, who will assume responsibility for all aspects of the work. Joint venture and cooperative proposals will not be considered, but subcontracts are permitted provided that their use is clearly indicated on the Offeror's proposal, and the subcontractor(s) proposed to be used are identified in the proposal.
- Offerors should be aware of all applicable MBE requirements, as set forth in R.I. Gen. Law §37-14.1-1, *et seq.* The State's goal is for a minimum ten per cent (10%) participation by MBE's in all State procurements. For further information, contact the State MBE Administrator at (401) 574-8253 or [charles.newton@doa.ri.gov](mailto:charles.newton@doa.ri.gov) or visit the website <http://www.mbe.ri.gov>.
- Interested parties are instructed to consult the Division of Purchases web site on a regular basis, as additional information relating to this solicitation may be released in the form of an addendum to this RFP.

- Equal Employment Opportunity (RIGL 28-5.1) 28-5.1 Declaration of Policy: Equal opportunity and affirmative action toward its achievement is the policy of all units of Rhode Island State Government, including all public and quasi-public agencies, commissions, boards, and authorities and in the classified, unclassified, and non-classified services of state employments. This policy applies in all areas where the state dollars is spent, in employment, public service, grants and financial assistance, and in state licensing and regulation. For further information contact the Rhode Island Equal Employment Opportunity Office at 222-3090.
- The State reserves the right to request clarification of any aspect of materials received or to request further information as might be required to adequately evaluate credentials and qualifications.
- The State reserves the right to accept or reject any or all submissions received as a result of this solicitation, to waive minor irregularities, or to negotiate with any respondent, in any manner necessary, to serve the interests of the State.
- Respondents shall submit one (1) original and five (9) copies of their Technical Proposals. Respondents shall also submit one copy of their Cost Proposal in a signed, sealed envelope labeled with the firm name and marked “RFP # 7461365” Proposal may be mailed or hand delivered to:

**Rhode Island Department of Administration  
Division of Purchases, Second Floor  
One Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02908-5855**

- Proposals misdirected to other State locations or which are otherwise not present in the Division of Purchases at the time of opening for any cause will be determined to be late and may not be considered. The “Official” time clock is in the reception area of the Division of Purchases. Proposals emailed or faxed to the Division of Purchases will not be considered.
- Notwithstanding the forgoing, the State reserves the right to award on the basis of cost alone. Proposals found to be technically or substantially non-responsive at any point in the evaluation process will be rejected and not considered any further. The State may, at its sole option, elect to require presentations by Offerors clearly in consideration for award.

## SECTION 2 – SCOPE OF WORK

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

#### **INTENT:**

The University of Rhode Island (URI) is a public sea and land grant university. URI is regionally accredited by NEASC and many of its programs have specialized accreditations. URI currently offers a number of online courses through both its Kingston and Feinstein College of Continuing Education Campuses. In response to URI's Transformational Goals which include:

- Creating a 21<sup>st</sup> Century 24/7 Learning Environment;
- Increasing the magnitude, prominence, and impact of URI's research, Scholarship and creative work;
- Internationalizing and globalizing URI
- Building a community that values equity and diversity,

URI is seeking to offer specific degree programs and post-baccalaureate certificates totally online.

It is the intent of the University of Rhode Island (URI) to identify a single vendor to partner with us as we design, manage, and market new and existing programs and certificates online. Initially we are looking to design and offer an online Masters of Library and Information Studies (MLIS) and a Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP). In the near future we expect to move additional programs and post baccalaureate certificates online.

The program for the **Master of Library and Information Studies** degree consists of 16 required courses for a total of 31 credits including one course with a major paper requiring significant independent research and a written comprehensive examination. MLIS specializations include academic, public, and special librarianship, and school library media specialist. The MLIS degree is fully accredited by the American Library Association (ALA).

The Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) Nurse Executive program consists of 39 credits including 500 practicum hours and requires a Master's degree in Nursing. At the present time, the curriculum builds on a Master's specialization in Nursing Administration and includes a Clinical Scholarship Portfolio and Practice Improvement Project as a capstone project. A unique feature is the close link between DNP and PhD course work where three required courses are shared.

URI is looking for a vendor to provide a comprehensive suite of services to assist these specific programs, and others as they are identified, with this process. At a minimum, the vendor must offer services in marketing, program design, online course development, program implementation, technology integration, enrollment management, retention services, and assistance in meeting applicable federal, state, and accreditation requirements.

URI will retain complete authority over strategic goals and planning; course and program outcomes, requirements, and content; intellectual property rights of faculty; hiring and retention of all instructors; admission standards; financial aid decisions; marketing campaigns including the use of URI logos and branding.

## **SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS:**

### **Full range of services**

- The vendor must support the full range of services of this RFP. The contract will not be split among vendors.

### **Security and Privacy**

- The vendor must agree to abide by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and be accountable for taking all possible steps to protect student information under that act.
- The vendor must agree to abide by all requirements of the University's Information Security Office to ensure the safety and security of all URI data.

### **Technology**

- The vendor must agree to work with the URI's existing LMS (SAKAI) and SIS (People Soft). Vendor may offer an alternative, but may not require the use of any specific system.

### **Contracts and Cost**

- Contract must be on a tuition-share basis with no required "up-front" payments by URI.
- Any contract longer than 4 years, must include an "opt out clause" at or before the 4 year period.
- Any contract longer than 4 years must include optional two year extensions.
- Should the program include a mandatory or voluntary face-to-face component requiring additional fees or tuition which may be used (at least partially) to pay for lodging, meals, activities, and or credits, this revenue will not be split with the vendor.

### **Demonstrated Experience**

- Vendor must be able to demonstrate successful experience with a minimum of three public higher education institutions of the same or similar size to URI in moving programs on line. Successful experience is defined as meeting the enrollment growth and retention goals as defined by the institution.
- Company must be able to demonstrate a record of meeting contractual deadlines over three years with a minimum of three contracts with public higher education institutions of the same or similar size to URI.
- The company must be able to demonstrate its fiscal viability by providing a letter of net worth from a CPA.

## GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The vendor is expected to work as a partner with the Office of Online Education and the identified academic and support departments in the design and implementation of online programs and certificates. The vendor will provide a comprehensive suite of services to support this work from its planning stages, launch of the program, and its implementation and growth for several years. Specifically the vendor will work with the University, its various offices, and the academic departments to help design the program to appeal to an online audience. It will provide training for faculty on how to design and teach in an online environment and assist faculty in moving their courses on line. It will work with various departments such as (but not limited to) admissions, enrollment management, legal, online education, instructional technology, information security office, office of student learning outcomes assessment and accreditation, communications and marketing, and the office of the provost to ensure the program meets all URI, state, federal, and accreditation requirements and is fully integrated with the various URI systems. The vendor will market the program using a wide range of methods and mediums including digital and traditional media, employer based partnerships, and national and international field sales representatives. The vendor will work with prospective students to ensure they meet the admissions standards of URI and submit the appropriate documents to meet URI's deadlines. The Vendor will provide retention services to support enrolled students.

URI will retain complete authority over strategic goals and planning; course and program outcomes, requirements, and content; intellectual property rights of faculty; hiring and retention of all instructors; admission standards; financial aid decisions; marketing campaigns including the use of URI logos and branding.

## GENERAL SCOPE OF WORK TO BE PREFORMED:

1) **Program Design:** The vendor must describe their expertise and experience in and the processes they use in working with academic departments and their faculty to design online programs to meet programmatic outcomes, to train faculty, and to support the design of online courses to meet specified student outcomes.

2) **Implementation:** The vendor must describe their expertise and experience in and the processes they use in working with the university departments, services, and divisions integral to the development and managing of online programs. This includes, but is not limited to, University administration, enrollment management, admissions, retention services, instruction technology services, information security offices, the Office of Online Education, legal offices, institutional research, business and fiscal offices. The Vendor must also describe their typical service level agreements and the metrics they use to monitor the various services they offer.

The vendor must provide a timeline detailing their plan for implementation for both the MLIS and DNP degrees such that the programs are ready for launch no later than the fall 2014 semester.

3) **Marketing:** The vendor must describe their expertise and experience in marketing online programs within Rhode Island, regionally, nationally and internationally, and provide examples of its ability to do so within the parameters of an institution's brand standards and visual guidelines. Additionally the vendor must indicate all of the metrics it uses to assess the effectiveness of its marketing. The vendor should provide a *sample* marketing plan, indicative of the vendor's usual approach and marketing process that demonstrates the vendor's ability to identify specific target audience segments, tactics and channels for reaching these segments, timelines, resource requirements, measurable objectives for each audience segment, and assessment processes. The vendor must also describe the processes and metrics it expects to employ when helping URI decide which future programs and certificates to move online.

4) **Student support:** The vendor must describe their expertise and experience in and the processes they use in supporting students at all points in their connection to the university from pre-admissions to graduation including financial aid.

5) **Technology:** The vendor must describe their expertise and experience in and the processes they use in working with the institutions learning management (Sakai) and student information (People Soft) systems. The vendor must indicate how it will provide technical support/help to faculty and students. The vendor must indicate where integration and or data transfer would be required and how it would be handled. The vendor must indicate its understanding of and processes to maintain the security of data under FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) and the university's safety and security rules and regulations.

If the vendor and the institution agree to use a vendor supplied LMS or other technologies and/or software, the vendor must describe their expertise and experience in and the processes they use to deploy this software, train staff and faculty, support the technologies/software, provide support/help desk services 24/7, and ensure 99% uptime. The use of vendor supplied technology must be optional and solely at the discretion of URI.

6) **Legal and Regulatory:** The vendor must describe their expertise and experience in and the processes they use in ensuring the university and the specific online programs comply with all Federal, State, and appropriate accreditation rules, regulations, and guidelines.

7) **Finance:** The vendor must describe their expertise in and experience with the processes they use in all aspects of their work with financial and budgeting offices. This includes the types and timing of reports on all aspects of their work. They must also describe how they structure payment schedules between the University and the vendor.

## **PROJECT KEY COMPONENTS**

URI is seeking a vendor to provide, at a minimum, the following services to design and move identified programs online.

### **Marketing**

- Provide market research demonstrating the opportunities for these two online programs and future programs/certificates as they are identified.
- Identify the specific markets and sub-groups of students it will target for each program and the type of marketing campaigns it will conduct.
- Develop and implement marketing campaigns, utilizing digital media, employer based partnerships, national field sales representatives, and internationally, to recruit and retain students into these programs sufficient to sustain the programs on a long-term basis.
- Ensure that all marketing plans and activities adhere to the University's brand standards and visual guidelines. URI retains authority over its brand and logos. All marketing campaigns must be mutually agreed on between the vendor and URI.

### **Program Design**

- Work with the appropriate departments to design the configuration of the program including length of courses, sequence of courses, start dates, and any face-to-face components.
- Ensure the program design meets the learning outcomes as defined by the departments.

### **Online Course Development**

- Provide Faculty Training in best practices for online delivery.
- Provide Instructional Design support to individual faculty as they design their online courses using national standards such as Quality Matters and/or Sloan-C.
- Provide Instructional Design support on the development and implementation of professional field experiences.
- Provide Instructional Design support to ensure that courses meet accessibility guidelines.
- Provide assistance in designing one or more courses as a MOOC.

### **Program Implementation**

- Work with the appropriate University departments including (but not limited to) admissions, enrollment management, instructional technology services, online education, computer security, and student learning outcomes assessment and accreditation to ensure integration with existing systems as necessary.

### **Technology**

- Work with our existing LMS (Sakai) and SIS (People Soft), although the vendor may offer the option of a different LMS)
- Work with the University's Information Security Office to meet the Universities safety and security standards.

### **Enrollment Management**

- Recruit students and work with them to prepare admissions materials to meet the specific program defined admission requirements (following federal laws barring



commissions for recruitment).

- Monitor students to ensure they meet all admissions deadlines and requirements.
- Work with the Financial Aid Office to ensure students have access to and understand the procedures to apply for financial aid and meet financial aid guidelines.

#### **Retention**

- Provide services to support the retention of enrolled students such as coaching, mentoring, or concierge.
- Refer students to appropriate URI services as necessary

#### **Assistance in Obtaining all applicable Federal and State Regulations**

- Provide information and assistance in obtain appropriate State Authorizations
- Ensure programs conform to all federal regulations
- Work with the departments to ensure programs meet regional and specialized accreditation standards.

#### **Finance**

- Describe their expertise and experience in and the processes they use in all aspects of their work with financial and budgeting offices

#### **Cost**

- Describe the cost share requirements between URI and the vendor including options for contract lengths and opt out clauses.

#### **At all times the University of Rhode Island will retain complete authority over:**

- The strategic goals of the University, College, and Departments
- The definition of course and degree outcomes and requirements
- Course content including selection/development of texts and digital materials
- Intellectual property rights of the faculty and URI
- The hiring and retention of all faculty including per course instructors.
- The assignment of faculty to teach classes
- Admission standards and the selection and admission of students
- Financial Aid decisions
- URI logos and branding

### **PROPOSAL QUESTIONS & SUBMISSION**

Questions, in **Microsoft Word Format**, concerning this solicitation, must be e-mailed to the Division of Purchases at [questions@purchasing.state.ri.us](mailto:questions@purchasing.state.ri.us) no later than the date & Time indicated on page 1 of this solicitation. Please reference the RFP# on all correspondence.

Responses to questions received, if any, will be provided, as an Addendum to this RFP, and posted on the Rhode Island Division of Purchases website at [www.purchasing.ri.gov](http://www.purchasing.ri.gov). It is the responsibility of all interested parties to download this additional information. *If technical assistance is required to download, call the Help desk at (401) 222-2142, ext. 134.*

Responses to this solicitation to provide the required services must be received by the Division of Purchases **on or before the date & time indicated on page one of this document.**

Responses (a clearly marked original plus 9 copies should be mailed or hand-delivered in a sealed envelope marked RFP #7461365 RFP Title: **Online Program Service Provider** to

RI Dept. of Administration  
Division of Purchases, 2nd floor  
One Capitol Hill  
Providence, RI 02908-5855

NOTE: Proposals received after the above-referenced due date and time will not be considered. Proposals misdirected to other State locations or which are otherwise not presented in the Division of Purchases by the scheduled due date and time will be determined to be late and may not be considered. Proposals faxed, or emailed, to the Division of Purchases will not be considered. The “official” time clock is located in the reception area for the Division of Purchases. **(Please be advised that FedEx/UPS do not always arrive by 10:30 am, it is recommended that you send your submission to arrive at least one day early)**

### **RESPONSE CONTENTS**

Responses should include the following:

- A completed and signed four-page RIVIP generated bidder certification cover sheet (downloaded from the RI Division of Purchases Internet home page at [www.purchasing.ri.gov](http://www.purchasing.ri.gov)
- A completed and signed W-9 Form downloaded from the RI Division of Purchases Internet home page at [www.purchasing.ri.gov](http://www.purchasing.ri.gov) should be included in proposal marked “**Original**” only.
- A **separate, signed and sealed**, Cost Proposal reflecting the fee structure proposed for this scope of service (**Phase II, for applicants that are “short-listed”**)
- A **separate Technical Proposal** describing the background, qualifications, and experience with and for similar programs, as well as the work plan or approach proposed for this requirement.
- In addition to the multiple hard copies of proposals required, Respondents are requested to provide their proposal in electronic format (CDRom or Diskette). Microsoft Word / Excel OR PDF format is preferable. Only 1 electronic copy is requested.

## **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Responses will be evaluated in two parts. Part one will require the technical submission and will be evaluated on the following criteria:

The Technical Proposal must contain the following sections:

a. Executive Summary

The Executive Summary is intended to highlight the contents of the Technical Proposal and to provide State evaluators with a broad understanding of the offeror's technical approach and ability.

b. Offeror's Organization and Staffing

This section shall include identification of all staff and/or subcontractors proposed as members of the project team, and the duties, responsibilities, and concentration of effort which apply to each (as well as resumes, curricula vitae or statements of prior experience and qualification).

c. Work Plan/Approach Proposed

This section shall describe the offeror's understanding of the State's requirement, including the result(s) intended and desired, the approach and/or methodology to be employed and a work plan for accomplishing the results proposed. The description of approach shall discuss and justify the approach proposed to be taken for each task, and the technical issues that will or maybe confronted at each stage on the project. The work plan description shall include a detailed proposed project schedule (by task and subtask), a list of tasks, activities, and/or milestones that will be employed to administer the project, the assignment of staff members and concentration of effort for each, and the attributable deliverables for each and will identify and describe what type of tutor training methodology will be utilized in the program.

d. Previous Experience and Background, including the following information:

- i. A comprehensive listing of similar projects undertaken and/or similar clients served, including a brief description of the projects;
- ii. A description of the business background of the offeror (and all subcontractors proposed), including a description of their financial position.

e. The offeror's status as a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), certified by the Rhode Island Department of Administration, and/or a subcontracting plan which addresses the State's goal of ten percent (10%) participation by MBE's in all State procurements. Questions concerning this requirement should be address to Charles Newton, M.B.E. Officer, at (401) 222-6253.

## **SECTION 5 - EVALUATION AND SELECTION**

The State will commission a Technical Review Committee, which will evaluate and score all proposals, using the following criteria:

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>
Specific Requirements - Meets all of the specific requirements as outlined in the RFP	15
Quality of the Marketing Plan and Planning Process	10
Quality of the Program Design Plan and Planning Process	10
Quality of their Program Implementation Plan and Planning Process	10
Quality of their Faculty Training, Support, and Course Development plans	10
Quality of the Technology Plan and Planning Process	10
Quality of their Student Support from pre-admissions through graduation	10
Quality of their Legal and Regulatory Support	5
<b>Total Possible Technical Points</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>COST:</b> cost share and contract options	20

<b>Total Possible Points</b>	<b>100 Points</b>
------------------------------	-------------------

**All OFFERERS must receive a minimum score of 55 points on the technical submission. Offers not scoring at least 55 points will not be considered further.**

A Technical Review Sub-Committee will review all submissions. After review, one or more OFFERERS may be invited to present to the sub-committee and answer questions.

Proposals found to be technically or substantially non-responsive at any point in the evaluation process will be rejected and not considered further. The State reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted and to waive any informalities in any vendor's proposal. The State may, at its sole option, elect to require presentation(s) by offerors clearly in consideration for award.

The ranked findings and selection recommendation will be submitted to the State's Purchasing Agent for final approval.